



# Higgins Lake Property Owners Association<sup>SM</sup>

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**President:** Charlene Cornell, **Vice Pres:** Greg Semack, **Secretary:** Herb Weatherly, **Treasurer:** Bruce Carleton  
**Directors:** Wayne Brooks, Jack Cornell, Curt DeVoe, Becky Gibson, Bob McKellar, John Ogren, Fred Swinehart

Higgins Lake Property Owners Association  
Board Meeting Minutes  
November 15, 2021

The meeting was called to order by President Charlene Cornell at 9:04 A.M.

**Board Members Present:** Charlene Cornell, Greg Semack, Bruce Carleton, Herb Weatherly, Becky Gibson, John Ogren, Jack Cornell, Wayne Brooks, Fred Swinehart, and Curt DeVoe. Bob McKellar was absent.

**Agenda:** John asked to move the sewer project topic to the beginning of the agenda.

**President's Comments:** None.

**October Minutes:** The October 18, 2021, Minutes were accepted as written.

**Committee Reports:**

**Secretary/Office:** None.

**Treasurer's Report:** The October 31, 2021, financials were presented. Bruce noted that the environmental fund is light vs the budget, as we did not pursue a RLS follow-up study this year. Jack added that he is working on funding for this project, but there is not much available as far as grants. Bruce then stated he will be working on the 2022 budget after the November financials are completed. Bruce asked Board members for any input they may have regarding 2022 projects.

**Sewer Project:** A discussion was held about the sewer project. Becky noted that HLPOA members have been contacted and were sent a petition, along with a request to contact state and federal officials. Fred stated that he is trying to set up a charitable 501(c)(3) fund to assist with this project. Greg added that Dave Udy is continuing to seek state and federal funding.

**Membership & Communication:** Wayne stated that we have 526 members vs our budget of 520. Wayne also said that he is creating the cover letters for our upcoming bulk membership mailing. Charlene added that she is working on some vintage style note cards, which will be made available to our members. Becky shared that she has been updating and revamping several areas of our website. Thank you, Becky!

**Riparian Committee:** John updated us that two projects have been postponed for discussion in the spring: PA 56 sign locations and road-end linear docks.

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**Environmental Committee: Environmental Committee:** - Fred reported the following:

**Higgins Lake Clean Water Assistance Fund:**

Fred said we are working with the GLUA to set up and define a 501(c)3 organization to assist low-income households connect to the proposed sewer system. The concept was announced by Dave Hall in his public meeting presentation of 10/23/2021: A fund of funds dedicated to support the connection costs of needy residents in Gerrish Lyon Utility Authority special assessment district.

**Little Creek's Albemarle Road Culvert Replacement:** Fred stated the replacement of the perched culvert on Dewey Road has been completed. The current estimates for that project appear to be coming in below plan. Fred has asked Josh Leisen of Huron Pines and Roger Saxton of the Roscommon County Road Commission to estimate costs to replace the collapsed culvert where Little Creek crosses Albemarle Road using similar technology to that used successfully on Big Creek. This collapsed culvert inhibits passage of aquatic species less than 100' upstream from the lake. This is a projected project for next summer's RCRC activity.

**Macro Invertebrate Baseline Survey of Big Creek and The Cut:** Fred said Melanie Brown led our 2021 efforts to identify bottom dwelling macro invertebrate species and to assess their populations, which are indicative for the health of these two stream environments. Baseline definitions of designated portions of these streams have been defined so that each year the same areas can be profiled for species present. Reports for this summer's work are being placed on our website under Tributary Creeks, Springs, and Drains.

**2021 Water Quality Sampling and Analysis of Near Shore Waters:** Fred noted we are in our fourth year of student sampling and analyzing the near shore waters of our lake for chemical and biological contamination. We have received approval for student participation in 2021/2022 school year. The averaged data of near shore testing shows a very troubling rise in both the total and escherichia coliform bacterial populations in the lake. The effects of more and more nutrient loading in the lake from septic system leaching and other pollution sources in our watershed are certainly creating this very serious decrease in Higgins Lake water quality. Please refer to our website for the data and graphs showing these very troubling trends.

**Determination of Extent and Nature of Micro-plastic Contamination:** This project has been deferred to 2022 due to complications from Covid-19 regulations.

**Other Possible Project Activity:** Some additional programs are being added for consideration next summer.

1. Health Department Survey of Big Creek
2. In-stream habitat improvements for Big Creek
3. Base line study of algal presence in the lake.
4. A "Trash Bash" MRWA sponsored event in the fall.

**PAC:** Greg spoke recently to Senator VanderWall about three topics:

1. Shoreline erosion,
2. AIS and the problems at boat washes,
3. Getting the state to help with funding of the sewer project.

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Senator VanderWall is optimistic that progress is being made in each area although nothing has been finalized at this point.

Greg then led a discussion about the importance of a lobbying firm and gave suggestions about how to proceed. Fred moved to continue working with the lobbying firm PAA, with Tyrone Sanders as our representative, if things can be seen to move forward in a manner consistent with our goals. These goals might include lobbying to help secure funds for the sewer project. The motion was seconded by Becky. Motion passed. Greg will be the contact person for PAA and will advise us later what his progress has been to this end.

**HLSIO:** Greg noted that the committee will be meeting this Thursday to discuss 2022 business and research. Also, 2021 year-end reports are forthcoming.

**Ongoing Business:** Regarding the AMVETS litigation, Charlene contacted attorney Bill Carey for an update.

**New Business:** Charlene, John and Greg attended a ZOOM meeting with the DNR, recapping the 2021 goals and the upcoming goals for 2022. Boat washes and AIS were areas of discussion.

**Adjournment:** Curt moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Herb. Motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 11:16 A.M.

**The next meeting will be December 20, 2021, at 9:00 A.M.**